

REMARKS

Claims 1-28 have been rejected. Claims 12 and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Also, the Examiner has indicated that claims 1-11, 13-19 and 21-28 are allowed.

I. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of EP 0827838 to Kitahara et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,363,134 to Barbehenn et al., JP 11058704 to Takahiro et al. and U.S. Patent No. 5,877,786 to Sekiya et al.

The Examiner has rejected claims 12 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable in view of Kitahara, Barbehenn, Takahiro and Sekiya. However, since claims 12 and 20 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, Applicant submits that the rejection of such claims is now moot.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

As stated above, the Examiner has indicated that claims 1-11, 13-19 and 21-28 are allowed. In view of the cancellation of claims 12 and 20, Applicant submits that the Application is now in condition for allowance.

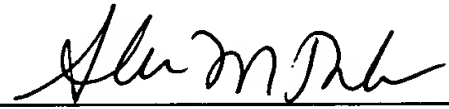
III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Application No. 09/816,770

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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